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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 005464

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2013

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON FONMIN GUL: FOCUS ON IRAQ, MIDDLE EAST, CYPRUS, ARMENIA, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman; reasons: 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) Summary: FonMin Gul said Aug. 27 the GOT wants a democratic, stable Iraq able to govern itself; GOT will move cautiously toward a decision on possible troop contribution to stabilization force; U.S. response to Turkey's concerns on PKK/Kadek remains a key point for Ankara. Reaffirming U.S. commitment to a strategic relationship, Ambassador reiterated U.S. hope for a Turkish troop contribution in Iraq; urged renewed GOT efforts for a Cyprus settlement based on Annan III and normalized relations with Armenia; cautioned against a P.M. Erdogan trip to Iran, especially before making a trip to Washington or Tel Aviv; and called for continued Turkish progress on trafficking in persons and child abduction. End summary.

2. (C) Warmly welcoming the Ambassador Aug. 27, FonMin Gul said Turkey takes it as a reaffirmation of the importance Washington attaches to bilateral relations that the Administration would appoint someone who had been serving as a senior aide to the Vice President. Although the two countries have experienced problems at times, it's been all in the family. Most important is that Turkey and the U.S. share values: an attachment to democracy, human rights, and a market economy. Since what the U.S. wants to see in the rest of the world reflects these common values, Turkey will cooperate, even on difficult issues.

IRAQ

3. (C) In regard to shared values, Iraq is especially sensitive for Turkey and Turkey cannot remain indifferent, Gul said. Turkey prefers a democratic, stable, free-market Iraq at peace with its neighbors, an Iraq in which a broad-based government rules its own country. Therefore, the GOT has instructed the Turkish military to consult with its American counterparts and has dispatched fact-finding teams to Iraq. At the same time, the GOT faces opposition in parliament and from the intellectual elite. "I am doing my best to prepare public opinion, although it's not easy," Gul added. Turkey is looking at Iraq as a whole. However, Turkey has concerns in the north. Moreover, elimination of the PKK/Kadek is essential and the U.S. must avoid a situation in which the PKK/Kadek misinterprets U.S. policy and avoids laying down its arms.

4. (C) In emphasizing his goal of playing a constructive role, Ambassador responded that he has come as a friend of Turkey, bearing the message from President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary Powell that the U.S. and Turkey have an important strategic relationship which has withstood many tests over time. Moreover, the President remains personally engaged in strongly supporting Turkey's EU candidacy.

5. (C) On Iraq, the Ambassador noted newly arrived instructions reiterating President Bush's unshaken resolve in the face of recent terrorist attacks in Baghdad, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. We are committed to remain in Iraq as long as it takes to stabilize the situation and to depart when a capable civilian government is in place. We look forward to working with our friends and allies to achieve this goal. In this context we would welcome a Turkish contribution to the stabilization force; we expect Turkey to make its decision based on its own calculation of national interests. While we recognize Turkey's specific concerns in the northern part of Iraq, it is important to look at the situation as a whole and to create in Baghdad a government capable of disposing of the country's ample resources to the benefit of all. We are trying to ease tensions in the north. We are pleased at the better communication between the U.S. and Turkey, including the Bremer/Turkish delegation meeting in Baghdad, our provision of responses to cooperation proposals MFA U/S Ziyal presented in Washington in June, and Turkey's impending assumption of a place in the CIC. Washington continues to

work on our proposal for dealing with the PKK/Kadek in line with our commitment to end terrorism threats in any form from Iraq.

MIDDLE/NEAR EAST

16. (C) We will remain engaged in a search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, the Ambassador said. In this effort it is important to shut down recruitment of terrorists and generation of financial sources for terrorism, especially by Hamas, to avoid disruption of the road map.

17. (C) We appreciate the good U.S.-Turkish dialogue on Iran, the Ambassador noted. U.S. concerns remain strong regarding Iran's nuclear program, in particular unanswered questions surrounding the fuel cycle, and the impending IAEA Board of Governors' meeting will be a key reference point. We have also heard that P.M. Erdogan might be considering a visit to Iran. Such a visit, especially before he makes a visit to the U.S. or Israel, could be construed in Washington as Turkey's seeking Iran's approval to join the stabilization force and in any event would have a deleterious effect on views of the GOT in the Administration and Congress.

18. (C) Gul did not respond on the latter point. On prospects for Middle East peace, he emphasized that, despite being disappointed by the deterioration in the climate, the GOT knows the U.S. remains committed to the road map. Turkey wants to play a positive role and will soon make an announcement regarding the peace process.

CYPRUS

19. (C) With May 2004 bringing both Cyprus accession to the EU and a possible presidential visit in connection with the NATO summit in Istanbul, Ambassador pressed for renewal of Turkish attention this autumn to the search for a solution. Annan III remains the best basis for a solution. U.S. Special Cyprus Coordinator Weston plans to visit the region in October. In the wake of this spring's CBMs, the will of the people on both sides is clearly for a settlement. Political leaders on both sides should seize the opportunity. The U.S. puts great emphasis on having December local elections in the north held freely and fairly, preferably with international monitors.

110. (C) Gul declared that elections will definitely be fair. One should also expect new CBMs from the Turkish Cypriot side. The GOT wants a settlement. This problem cannot go on unsolved: "No solution is not a solution." Turkey's concern, however, is that a settlement be realistic and lasting; the GOT could not afford to have a settlement unravel.

ARMENIA

111. (C) Noting the heavy expenditure of political capital by the Vice President and Secretary Powell to avert an Armenian genocide resolution, the Ambassador emphasized that it is getting harder and harder to deflect such language. It is best to leave the question to historians. But the issue is more manageable if Turco-Armenian talks proceed to the point where Turkey opens the border.

112. (C) Asking that we treat the information as exceptionally sensitive, Gul noted that Turco-Armenian talks have been continuing on a periodic basis in Istanbul. His meeting with Armenian FonMin Oskanyan in Madrid went well; the two plan to meet on the margins of the UNGA in late September. At the same time it is important to have a smooth transition in Azerbaijan, which could help bring the three FonMins together in an effort to make progress on the question as a whole.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

113. (C) In recalling that Washington will issue its decision in September on Turkey's TIP country classification, the

Ambassador took note of Turkey's concrete progress in taking steps to combat TIP but cautioned that, whatever the classification turns out to be next month, it is essential to maintain progress.

14. (C) Gul responded that Turkey is doing its best; the GOT is keen on pursuing TIP. But Turkey has already achieved much progress and the GOT strongly hopes for a decision to move Turkey up from Tier III to Tier II.

HAGUE CONVENTION/CHILD ABDUCTION

15. (C) The U.S. is pleased Turkey has signed the Convention; now it is important to pursue enforcement. The U.S. might be able to offer technical assistance or judicial exchanges in this regard. The objective is to ensure that the highly combustible issue of child abduction is handled properly so that it does not interfere with our ability to focus on the strategic dimension of the bilateral relationship.

16. (C) DirGen for the Americas Banguoglu responded that one child abduction case is now in the Turkish courts; we should await the decision.

17. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN